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EA-01-21  
5401  
E-99-382  
Fawn Creek

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE

DECISION RECORD and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Fawn Creek Forest Management Project  
Environmental Assessment No. OR090-EA-01-21  
Sale Tract No. E-99-382

**BACKGROUND**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the effects of this Proposed Action and alternatives. The EA and a preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for public comment in July, 2001. Six public comments were received.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR090-EA-01-21), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl" (April 1994) and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan" (June 1995); (2) the Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action and alternatives do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

**DECISION**

It is the decision of the BLM to select the Proposed Action described in the Fawn Creek Forest Management Project EA. This EA and the FONSI analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts.

Implementation of this decision will result in forest management activities including: density management by commercial timber harvest in both Late-Successional Reserve (LSR) lands and Riparian Reserves; felling of trees to create coarse woody debris in both LSR lands and Riparian

Reserves; and road construction, renovation, and decommissioning. All design features identified in the EA (pp. 3-5) will be implemented.

The selected alternative conforms with the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl" (NSO ROD, April 1994) and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan" (RMP, June 1995), as amended by the "Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines" (January 2001).

## **ALTERNATIVES**

In addition to the selected alternative, four other alternatives were considered in detail in the EA. Alternative A would undertake density management with a lighter initial treatment followed by more thinning entries in the future. Alternative B would be identical to the proposed action with the exception of commercial harvest of additional LSR. Alternative C is the "no action" alternative and would involve no management activities. Alternative D prescribes density management of LSR acres that can be yarded by cable from existing roads; no density management would take place within Riparian Reserves. Alternative D was developed in response to comments received during the 30-day public comment period.

## **RATIONALE FOR SELECTION**

The purpose of action in the LSR and Riparian Reserves is to hasten development of some late-successional forest structural characteristics. The purpose of the Riparian Enhancement action is to improve fish habitat. All four action alternatives would meet the purposes of the actions to some extent.

The Proposed Action would meet most completely the purpose of and need for action in the Fawn Creek area. It would speed development of late-successional forest structural characteristics, through acceleration of diameter growth of retention trees in both the LSR and Riparian Reserves; hasten canopy layering; increase crown ratios; create an immediate pulse of downed wood; and plant and grow shade-tolerant conifers. The Proposed Action is consistent with the treatment criteria in the LSR Assessment for the Oregon Coast Province – Southern Portion (RO267, RO268), and with the standards and guidelines in the NSO ROD; thus it does not require project-level review by the Regional Ecosystem Office.

The Proposed Action would meet the Riparian Enhancement purpose of and need for action to improve fish habitat by accelerating formation of gravel deposition and deep pools in streams. Based on the analysis discussed and presented in the EA, the Proposed Action is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) and the objectives for the Riparian Reserves. The Proposed Action would not prevent or retard attainment of any of the ACS objectives. Silvicultural practices in the Riparian Reserves will help promote desired vegetation characteristics needed to attain ACS objectives.

As discussed in the EA, the four action alternatives would have similar effects on most ACS Objectives, LSR Objectives, and effects on fungi habitat. Alternatives A and D may cause a smaller increase in peak and summer low flows than the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action would degrade habitat for red tree voles and spotted owls in the short term.

Ultimately, habitat for both of these species would be enhanced.

Alternative A would have effects similar to the Proposed Action on red tree vole habitat and spotted owl foraging habitat. However, repeated entries would disrupt attempts by red tree voles and spotted owls to disperse back into the treated area.

Alternative B would have effects similar to the Proposed Action on red tree vole habitat in the southern and central portions of the project area proposed for thinning in both alternatives. However, Alternative B could lead to the severe decline of red tree voles in the northern portion of the project area, which would be unthinned in the Proposed Action. Because of this potential effect on red tree voles, Alternative B would be likely to adversely affect northern spotted owls.

Alternative C (no action) would not meet the purpose of and need for action within the LSR or Riparian Reserves. Of all the alternatives, Alternative C would result in the slowest development of late-successional forest structural characteristics. Alternative C would lead to the slowest development of desirable fish habitat conditions in streams.

Alternative D would meet the purpose of and need for action within the LSR, but over a relatively small area compared to the Proposed Action. Within the LSR, Alternative D would lead to accelerated development of late-successional characteristics on fewer acres than the other action alternatives. Alternative D would not meet the purpose of and need for Riparian Enhancement action, except adjacent to Stream 7. Although Alternative D would create somewhat less soil disturbance and wildlife habitat disruption than the Proposed Action, Alternative D fulfills much less of the purpose of and need for action in the Fawn Creek area.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

A public notice advertising the availability of the EA and FONSI appeared in the Eugene Register-Guard on July 4, 2001. Additionally, the EA and FONSI were mailed to interested individuals and organizations. A 30-day public comment period closed on August 3, 2001. Six comments were received and are addressed in the EA.

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, consultation was completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which found that the action "...[is] not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the spotted owl."

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, consultation was completed with National Marine Fisheries Service, which found that the action "...[is] not likely to adversely affect OC coho salmon" and "... [is] unlikely to adversely affect designated EFH."

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been notified of this proposal and has determined, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.5(b), that the proposed undertaking would have no effect on cultural resources.

The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians were notified of this project during the scoping process, requesting information regarding tribal issues or concerns relative to the project. A response was received outlining general concern over protection of cultural resources.

## IMPLEMENTATION

This decision will be implemented by: (1) a timber sale contract, and (2) a service contract or BLM directly. A timber sale contract will implement the road construction, timber harvest, falling of trees for downed woody debris in the harvest area, and decommissioning of roads used for timber harvest operations described in the Proposed Action. A service contract or the BLM will implement the felling of trees for large woody debris outside of timber harvest areas that is described in the Proposed Action.

## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

The decision to implement the timber sale portion of this project may be protested under 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies. In accordance with 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for the timber sale portion of this project will not be subject to protest until the notice of sale is first published in the Eugene Register-Guard on August 29, 2001. This published notice of sale will constitute the decision document for the purpose of protests of the timber sale portion of this project. 43 CFR 5003.2(b) Protests of the timber sale portion of this decision must be filed with this office within fifteen (15) days after first publication of the notice of sale.

The decision to implement the service contract/non-timber sale portion of this project may be appealed to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, the notice of appeal must be filed in this office within thirty (30) days of the first publication of the notice of this decision in the Eugene Register-Guard on August 29, 2001, for transmittal to the Board. A copy of the notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs, must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 500 NE Multnomah Street, Suite 607, Portland, Oregon 97323, within the same time frame. In taking an appeal, there must be strict compliance with the regulations. In accordance with 43 CFR 4.21, an appellant has the right to petition the Office of Hearing and Appeals to stay the implementation of the decision; however, an appellant must show standing and present reasons for requesting a stay of the decision. The petition for stay must be filed together with a timely notice of appeal. 43 CFR 4.21(a)(2).

Signed by: *Steven Calish*  
Field Manager, South Valley Resource Area

Date: August 24, 2001